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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to assist librarians who are preparing a video-tape orientation program suitable for large audiences, composed mainly of college freshmen. It results from the authors' experiences of planning and taping a television library orientation program and is directed toward the librarian who is required to prepare such a program but is inexperienced in video-taping. Stress is placed upon the practical, video-taping hints and common pitfalls to be avoided, rather than the technical aspects. (Author/SJ)

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ADVICE ON MAKING A

COLLEGE ORIENTATION VIDEO-TAPE

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Abstract: This article results from the authors' experiences of planning and taping a television library orientation program and is directed toward the librarian who is required to prepare such a program but is inexperienced in video-taping. Stress is placed upon the practical, video-taping hints and common pitfalls to be avoided, rather than the technical.

Advice on Making a College Orientation Video-tape

This article is intended to help librarians who are preparing a video-tape orientation program suitable to large audiences, composed mainly of college freshmen. Its purpose is not to explain the need for library orientation programs at the college and university level nor to evaluate the various methods of orientation. Several other authors have dealt with these subjects. Barbara Phipps in "Library Instruction for the Undergraduate,"[1] mentions fourteen different orientation methods commonly used, but finds fault with all except "individual aid ... to the struggling students." Most libraries, including the Oregon State University Library, do not have sufficient staff to give this type of personalized orientation. As Clayton Brown says, "in larger college and university libraries attempting mass instruction, the choice is [likely] ... to be between television and the auditorium size classes, between television and the 'herded tour', or between television and nothing at all."[2] Considering the alternatives available, television is definitely preferable. The question of how much students learn from television as compared with live instruction was answered by an Illinois State Normal University study,[3] which found no difference in achievement. Many other articles deal with the problems involved with video-tape orientation,[4] but most conclude that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

At Oregon State University, where a competent TV facility exists on campus, a library committee was charged with creating an interesting, informative, attractive library orientation video-tape. Committee membership was made up of a cataloger, reference librarian, reserve book room librarian and a staff member from circulation. All were unfamiliar with video tape production. It was intended that each person bring a different point of view to the committee and thereby help to prepare a well-rounded and accurate orientation program.

The script writing was the most time-consuming and difficult part of the task. Defining the audience, the method, and the goals of the video-tape, and determining time and subject limits were the first priorities.

At each meeting new information was added to the script and parts were rewritten and rearranged. The script, when completed, was quite short -- 20 minutes -- long enough to present the necessary information and short enough not to overwhelm the viewer. It dealt with services offered by the library, and their location, and covered basic use of the card catalog and Reader's Guide. It was decided that this information would benefit the majority of entering freshmen, and that more detailed instruction could be treated in another video-tape or by other means.

Having completed the script, the committee as a group planned shots and props to illustrate each concept in the script. Most of the scenes were to be taped inside the library, and narration was

to be added later. Because the library building and surroundings are pleasing in appearance. it was possible to plan some artistic shots outside as well.

The director of the TV studio joined in the committee's last few meetings, reviewed the script, and explained the technical aspects of taping. Because of technical problems, the script had to be revised and plans for a few scenes had to be changed. Perhaps conferring with TV people earlier would have been advisable so that the need for corrections could have been avoided, and more emphasis could have been placed on the visual aspects of the production.

The television production took two full days and the editing, addition of narration and the dubbing of the background music took about three days. A completed video-tape production cannot be easily changed. For this reason, extreme care had to be taken with the original editing.

This video-tape was financed by OSU's classroom TV facility. If produced commercially it is estimated that the 20 minute video-tape would have cost approximately $1300-$1400.

The School of Home Economics has helped the library obtain funds to prepare other audio-visual presentations on the use of the library and its materials. Library staff are now working on three synchronized slide-tape presentations which go into more depth than the video-tape on the use of the card catalog, periodical indexes and government documents. Repetition between the video tape and the slide presenta-

tions has been kept to a minimum so that the slide presentations will supplement, not replace the video-tape.

What follows in the section called "Tips" are various suggestions which should prove helpful to any librarian who is involved in the production of a library orientation video-tape.

TIPS

Scripting

Appoint to the committee librarians from several departments of the library, so that different points of view can temper each other to create a well-rounded presentation.

Divide the work, e.g. chairman, secretary, producer, narrator, so that each person has a specific responsibility.

Make policy decisions early concerning matters such as intended audience, length of video-tape, depth of coverage, etc.

Keep presentation basic if the intended audience is not familiar with libraries. Do not use library jargon.

Type final script with a 3" margin on the left so that plans for taping can be written in.

Do not out-date the video-tape by mentioning very specific information which is subject to change, e.g. library hours.

Props and Visual-aids

Appoint one person to be in charge of props (e.g. catalog cards, special signs, particular books or magazines) called for in the script so that there is no confusion.

Consult with the TV department before preparing props to learn what is best for TV regarding proportions, overall size, etc.

Ask the TV staff to review the props before shooting in case any alterations or new props must be made.

Have necessary charts, etc. drawn by a graphics department familiar with TV art. This will eliminate any problems caused by TV medium.

Planning Shots

Try to add eye pleasing and interesting shots to the film to maintain audience interest.

Plan shots not only for each section but for each sentence and sometimes for each word since long drawn out shots prove boring. However, avoid flashing shots so quickly that the eye cannot grasp the object, unless this effect is intended.

TV equipment is heavy, bulky and difficult to move - therefore try to plan your shots accordingly.

Shooting

Have one person act as producer and liason between the committee and the TV director to avoid confusion.

Before the shooting make arrangements with the people in the library who are going to be taped so that each will know what is expected of him.

Try to tape at a time of year which shows the surroundings of the library to best advantage and plan for a time when the library is not crowded so that library service will not be interrupted.

Miscellaneous

Consider adding background music to the video-tape so that gaps in narration are not evident. Keep music low and unobtrusive, nothing too familiar or contemporary, or else audience will concentrate on music.

Have narrator work closely with taping and editing so that he is familiar enough with the script and the production that the addition of the narration goes smoothly and quickly.

Try to have a librarian available at the end of each showing whenever possible to answer questions.

Try to have library staff review and revise the video tape periodically to keep it up-to-date.

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